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ART. IX. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *The Waif: a Collection of Poems.* Cambridge : John Owen. 1845. 12mo. pp. 144.

THIS is an elegant little volume, containing a number of beautiful poems, which have hitherto led a precarious and somewhat vagabond existence on the outskirts of English literature, and have never before been brought into each other's company. They mostly appeal to one mood of the mind, and are distinguished rather by sweetness and delicacy than power. They are intended to soothe more than to stir. A serene sadness, a melancholy fringed with light, a kind of nun-like saintliness of tone and demeanour, are their general characteristics. The fine "Proem" of Professor Longfellow indicates their prominent features, and the condition of mind which they address. They are intended for those hours when we are oppressed by an indefinable sadness, a restless and powerless discontent with the things about us; when we are conscious of aspirations tied down by human weakness, and have the desire, but not the ability, to soar; —

" A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain."

To a person who reads the poems in another mood of mind, they may appear too tame, uniform, and gentle; for they come, —

" Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of time"; —

but,

" from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

" Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

" Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer."